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THE VINE

A VOLUME FROM THE
SYMBOLIST PRESS



PRICE TWO SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE
EDITED BY JAMES DUCKWORTH WOOD



The Vine:

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Edited by James
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*La vie est vaine :
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine . . .
Et puis—bonjour !*

*La vie est brève :
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve . . .
Et puis—bonsoir !*

LEON MONTENAEKEN.

With Daffodils.

I send you daffodils, my dear,
For these are emperors of spring,
And in my heart you keep so clear
So delicate an empery,
That none but emperors could be
Ambassadors endowed to bring
My messages of honesty.

My mind makes faring to and fro,
Deft or bewildered, dark or kind,
That not the eye of God may know
Which motion is of true estate
And which a twisted runagate
Of all the farings of my mind,
Or which has honesty for mate.

Only my love for you is clean
Of scandal's use, and though, maybe,
Far-rangers have my passions been—
Since thus the word of Eden went—
Yet of the springs of my content,
My very wells of honesty,
Are you the only firmament.

John Drinkwater.

The Moon-Worshippers.

PAUL paused at the door and gazed with rapture at the sun sinking behind the black woods ; the deep, wine-coloured glow was reflected in his eyes as though hidden fires had leapt into flames of ecstasy. The brown, decaying scents of autumn filled the hushed air ; a grey mist came creeping up the hillside, and a poignant sadness stole over him as he thought of the departed glories of summer . . . A faint wind sighed through the trees and some leaves pattered up the path. He turned to go in. The crescent moon was shimmering palely above the house ; it seemed cold and sinister, and he shuddered involuntarily as he entered.

He was glad to be inside the cosy lamp-lit drawing-room. A log fire was burning brightly, and the crackling wood filled the atmosphere with a faint, bitter-sweet aroma, with which mingled the fragrance of hot tea and toast. The red curtains drawn over the window enhanced the warmth of the room, and a pleasant languor came over his tired limbs as he lay back in the yielding arm-chair and stretched his feet to the cheerful blaze. His father was talking of the visit he had made that day to Great Baddow, the nearest market town, and his mother occasionally interposed a quiet remark, or refilled his cup with fresh tea. It was all very cosy and peaceful, and as his parents talked, he reflected how glorious was the contrast between his former holidays, usually spent in a dull London suburb, and these days of endless happiness.

Whiston Eaves was a rambling old house ; its ivy-covered walls, quaint gables, and mullioned windows remained always in the memory of those who passed along the Great Baddow road. The grounds were skirted by a low wall ; a rusty iron gate gave access from the road to the broad drive, fringed with tall beeches. From the front windows one could see the cluster of cottages known as Whiston Hamlet, and beyond, many miles of undulating pasture land. Behind the house the wooded ground sloped gently down to a swirling stream ; across the valley were dense woods. For many years Whiston Eaves had remained unoccupied and neglected, for prospective tenants were always deterred by the many strange rumours that had spread concerning the place ; it was said that nobody remained there for long, although the only reason given was that there was " something queer " about it. However, the prosaic John Heritage, an over-worked general practitioner in a London suburb, dismissed the rumours as old wives' tales, and eagerly seized the opportunity of securing a country residence at such low terms ; and disposing of his practice retired for a long desired rest. The

change had taken place during his son's last term at school, so that the old house, rambling grounds and wild woods were all fresh to Paul on his coming home for the summer holidays.

That summer had been a time of sheer wonder to him. Every day he wandered about the grounds ; yet never had the glamour surrounding the place departed. To-day he had loitered dreamily through the golden-brown carpeted woods across the stream, and it seemed to him that never before had his joy been so deep . . .

As he reclined in his arm-chair, gazing into the heart of the glowing fire, his thoughts reverted to his afternoon's walk. One incident lingered in his memory with a whimsical persistence. As he was returning home, he stood on the bank of the stream before crossing the frail footbridge, and looked up at Whiston Eaves, which stood on the sky-line. The wine-red glow of the setting sun was reflected in the diamond-paned windows, transmuting them into flaming jewels of burnished gold ; the sudden glare dazzled him, and he looked down again at the subdued, grey-green stream, but the images of the glittering panes danced before him long afterwards The footbridge, its timber rotted by exposure, and covered with lichen, was a favourite summer retreat. On the hot days he sat there and let his bare feet dangle in the cool water ; or he would lie flat, staring down, like Narcissus, at his mirrored face. Sometimes pale minnows would start in the translucent depths.

Yet he could not dispel a vague uneasiness ; for invariably when he had climbed the slope that rose to the house, and crossed the shrubbery at the top, he felt as though he were encountering some strange influence that was curiously inimical to his happiness. Usually it was only momentary, vanishing immediately he reached the house ; he had never troubled much about it, dismissing it as a trick of his highly strung imagination. But to-night it had disturbed him more ; he thought of the ghostly leaves that had pattered up the path, and the cold crescent moon gleaming above the house. He had shuddered, he remembered ; the moon had looked strangely remote . . . It occurred to him that the inexplicable uneasiness always seemed to grow when the moon was waxing, for he hardly noticed it when there was no moon . . . He shifted his position in the chair, and mentally scorned his fantastic imaginings.

His mother was playing the piano. She had a gentle touch, and a real sympathy for music. The melody was a quiet, plaintive one, agreeably soothing to his lassitude. He closed his eyes, and with the flickering firelight playing on his relaxed limbs, and the subdued haunting melody in his ears, he dozed peacefully . . .

He climbed the creaking attic stairs wearily, and walked along the landing towards his bedroom. The boards were, as yet,

uncarpeted and bare, and his feet disturbed the dust of ages that had settled in the cracks ; a faint odour of corruption rose to his nostrils. Overhead was a large skylight, through which the moonlight streamed, flooding the dusty, echoing passage with a pale radiance. He looked up at the moon, and again a strange fear crept over him ; then, yawning, he entered his bedroom, hurriedly drawing the blind and lighting the candle. The soft yellow light seemed quite warm and comforting.

II.

For several days he avoided his usual haunts, and confined his walks to the rolling country beyond the Great Baddow road. But he found no joy in the leafy lanes and hedged fields ; he felt drawn by an intense desire to revisit the stream, to dream by the mossy bridge and loiter again through the woods. Yet he feared to cross the shrubbery ; the very thought of the riotous, weed-choked ground, shadowed by the giant elm trees, caused a curious shiver.

It seemed, at those moments, that something stirred within him, arousing a wild inexplicable longing and leaving him unnerved, afraid . . .

Then, one afternoon, he hesitated as he walked down the drive. It was quite warm, and as he stood gazing at the copper leaves glittering in the mellow sunlight, he heard faintly the liquid note of a bird fluting in the depths of the woods. He turned back to the house, and swiftly made his way down the slope to the stream.

Yet in vain did he seek the solace of bygone days ; for the woods were void and desolate, and the Naiads had gone from the stream ; the very sunlight was cold and cheerless as it filtered palely through the branches overhead. As the day declined, and the twilight gloom filled the sombre woodland, the nameless fear that had haunted him during the past few days again stole over him like some ghostly mist. Fearful lest he should be overtaken by nightfall, he fled ; groping through the thick undergrowth, stumbling over wild roots and crashing through the dense foliage, whose whip-like branches lashed and stung his hot neck, he emerged, exhausted, on to the stream bank.

The sun was low in the darkling sky as he wearily climbed the slope, and slowly approached the shrubbery. Then, on the verge of the evergreens, a sudden premonition held him breathless ; impelled by a strange intuition he looked up at the clear, full moon above the house. It looked less cold and remote this evening, and a queer, shivering sensation of fascination and horror came over him, gradually suffusing his whole being with a wild and radiant sweetness . . .

He reached the house dazed and trembling.

III.

Paul entered his bedroom wearily, and paused, candlestick in hand, wondering if he would draw the curtain over the window. The full silver moon flooded the little attic; he doused the feeble candle, and undressed slowly in the moonlight, staring, as if spell-bound, at the skeleton window frame shadowed on the wall. His head was whirling madly, and from time to time he shivered with a curious delight as he thought of his strange experience in the shrubbery that afternoon Then he would thrust the thought away with horror, as though it were some forbidden joy; but his efforts to banish it from his memory were in vain. Although but fleeting, it had been so violent, so consuming . . . Oftentimes he had been carried away by the joy of the woods, but this had transcended all his former rapture; it had been like a sip of some magic philtre—even less than a sip—a waft, rather, of the fragrance of a divine nepenthe. Gradually he realised that the dread that had weighed him down for so long had been due to a haunting fear of something unknown—something infinitely remote, stirring in the utmost depths of his soul, and calling softly but insistently. But to-night he felt almost free from fear; strange ecstasies, as of pleasures yet to be fulfilled, flamed up in the whirling tumult of his imagination.

The room was aglow with a wondrous lustre. He opened the window to cool his throbbing head in the night air, and looked down at the enchanted shrubbery; it was bathed in a pearl-white radiance, and looked seductively tranquil. The tall elms cast great shadows across the lawn, which seemed like a fairy beach of silver sand. A faint breeze sighed over the evergreens; they trembled as though caressed by a lover. Lulled by the soothing moonlight and shrouded in the mystery of night, the slumbering earth dreamed of long forgotten joys, exhaling the elusive fragrance of a supernal loveliness. It mounted to his brain like wine. The whole garden was a glorious symphony of light; there came faintly floating to his ears, as though borne from an immeasurable distance, a dim, ethereal melody Then the shadow of his former dread stole over him, and he closed the window quickly.

IV.

Paul stirred in his sleep and awoke. For a few moments he stared drowsily at the moon-splashed wall; then his eyes cleared, and he leapt out of bed. He dressed hurriedly, as if there were no time to lose; he knew he must not be late. Then he quietly opened his door and descended the stairs. Below in the subdued hall the clock ticked loudly, beating rhythmically like a giant hammer on his throbbing brain. He trod cautiously along the dark passage,

and opened the garden door at the end. The freshness of cool evergreens was wafted towards him, and he sang gladly and exultingly as he ran across the lawn. Beyond the elms he saw as in a mist the joyous throng; their limbs gleamed white through wreaths of aromatic smoke. A strange chant rose and fell, deep and strong, swelling up with the rapt adoration of hundreds of voices.

With a wild passionate cry he entered the Circle and joined the Worshippers Then an awful ecstasy suffused his whole being, melting his heart with an unutterable sweetness, and uniting him with the great spirit of worship which surged up in mighty diapason from the chanting throng. From the altar rose an overwhelming cloud of sacrificial smoke, pungent with odorous herbs. The moon-priest, his robes dazzling white, stood in front with arms upraised and face upturned; his eyes shone with a joyous fervour, and loud above the voices of the multitude rose his deep, sonorous incantation. His profound tones were imbued with the wisdom of untold ages, the knowledge of infinite forces; his long, silky hair and beard glistened like silver. The fire, gleaming fitfully, cast a lurid glow on the ancient priest and the surrounding worshippers. The chant ceased, and they broke into a frenzied whirl of movement. Through the grey smoke wreaths Paul saw many leaping forms, their hair flying in the wind of their motion, their eyes shining like stars as they poured forth all their soul's gladness, crying loud with a triumphant ululation. Above, the great white moon seemed to exhale a mystic, opiate vapour, mingling with the fragrant clouds rising from the altar into the still air. The moonbeams were pervaded with a wild enchantment, drawing the very essence of their being forth in a glorious flood of rapture. Wilder and wilder grew the dance; louder and louder the frenzied chant; the scent of the burning herbs intoxicated him

In the heat and clamour he gradually lost all volition and consciousness, becoming blent with the rest in one tremendous wave of glory, sweeping up to ineffable heights of utter ecstasy. The whole scene swam before his eyes; he had a confused impression of naked forms flashing by, and the altar fire leaping into a roaring flame; of drifting clouds of choking smoke; then gradually all resolved into an impalpable mist

He stood shivering in the shrubbery. It was cold and dark, for a cloud had obscured the moon. His clothes were damp with dew, and with throbbing head he dragged his way over the lawn to the house.

V.

The morning sun filled the attic with beams of glittering gold; from the trees came the clear notes of a blackbird. Paul awoke and stretched his limbs lazily. He rose from his bed and opened

wide the window ; the air was sweet and fresh, exhilarating as champagne. Looking down pensively at the dewy garden and misty shrubbery, a vague impression of mystic visions, of strange adventure, passed through his mind ; then the pure breeze swept it away like a fairy cobweb, and his heart singing with the joyous blackbird, he dressed.

He was late for breakfast. His mother bustled round giving him his coffee.

" Paul, you look rather tired," she said ; " you walked too far yesterday afternoon."

She turned to leave the room, pausing at the door.

" And do please scrape your boots before you enter the house ; there are some dirty leaves on the carpet. Look, there are some sticking to your boots now. And have you been lighting bonfires ? Your clothes positively reek of burning leaves and smoke ! "

She slammed the door petulantly.

P. Caton Baddeley.

Psyche.

I have a city fair whose turrets flash
White as the breasts of some Circassian maid;
Beneath whose spires and minarets of jade
In halls of onyx fountains softly plash.
 I lie a-dreaming, while the water cool
 Makes crystal music in a marble pool.

Oft-times at noon I leave the southern gate,
And from a hill that overhangs the town
I watch the line of slaves toil up and down
The steep and narrow streets of my estate.
 Upon their shoulders bales of spices rare
 With curious fragrance fill the burning air.

But when the scented night is spangled deep
With silver stars, I hasten towards a shrine
Built years ago by those same slaves of mine.
There, while my rich domains are wrapt in sleep
 I, lord of mighty temples, hide my face
 Before the Dweller in that secret place.

James Duckworth Wood.

Pastoral.

In some smooth glade, within a forest deep
Borne on the stillness of the dreaming morn,
There breathes the echo of a distant horn
Whose early summons stirs the trees from sleep.
Then warily from every thicket peep
Brown, gentle eyes, as timid wood-nymphs scan
The secret hollow for a trace of Man,
And finding none, from sylvan hiding creep.

The far, faint horn is still. Upon the breeze
A happy piping, growing ever near
Awakes to joyous dance the fair young feet.
Fauns from the thickets laughing partners seize,
And whisper love-words in each rosy ear,
While Pan pipes, smiling, from his green retreat.

James Duckworth Wood.

The Shop.

THE dry air shimmered above the scorched pavements. From a court across the road, in a stifling room behind tightly closed doors and windows, an infant howled miserably.

It was three o'clock, and an hour ago the great factories had absorbed the young adult population, so that now the street was desolate. One of the houses had been transformed into a greengrocer's shop. At the open door stood a heavy, placid woman, whose hands, clasped beneath her apron, exaggerated the evidence of pregnancy.

A house-painter, whistling gently, came out of an area and bought a pennyworth of dates. The placid woman cut them wearily from a sticky mass displayed on trestles before the shop. From a basket containing some limp cabbages, which stood beneath the trestles, a cat stole out and rubbed itself cautiously against the legs of the house-painter. It fled suddenly, as though surprised by its own temerity, and the painter, spitting noisily upon the foot-path, crossed the street and disappeared behind the swing doors of a public bar.

Presently, from the door of the shop, a short, stout man in shirt-sleeves emerged. He glanced with furtive, light-blue eyes up and down the street. Outside the bar a lethargic constable saluted him with grave ennui. With a nod of intimacy, the stout man vanished in the black profundity of his own doorway.

A boy came round the corner on a lady's bicycle several sizes too large for him. On his face was an uneasy smile. With the saddle as pivot, he laboured awkwardly from the hips; the jerky action, transmitted to the handlebars, caused the machine to pursue a sinuous course. Children, with glistening, envious eyes, watched the automaton grow smaller in the distance.

Inside the greengrocer's shop a dispute had arisen. The stout man became excited, and fragments of rapidly-uttered abuse floated out upon the hot, still air. The placid woman defended herself with tedious reiteration. Gradually the voices sank to an incoherent murmur. Then a door slammed sharply, and from the back of the house came the faint, intermittent drone of a pump. Soon afterwards the woman reappeared carrying a bucket of water, from which, with coarse red hands, she commenced to sprinkle the cabbages. In the doorway the stout man watched her, his pale blue eyes half-closed in the rays of the pitiless sun.

A party of four small boys dragged themselves listlessly down the street. One of them held a bamboo cane, from which a worm

depended by a stout thread. Another carried a glass jar in which several minnows were swimming. The other two boys had cut themselves hawthorn sticks, which they waved aimlessly in the air. The boy with the glass jar glanced suspiciously at the policeman, who was fumbling with his white cotton gloves. Another boy, with a pleasant, honest face and soft, wavy hair, who had been chalking obscenities upon an entry door, came out to admire the fish. The water was quite warm, and one of the minnows was already dead.

In the distance appeared the figures of a man and a girl. The house-painter emerged from the swing-doors of the bar. He passed the constable, who muttered something about the great heat; but the painter, who was slightly deaf, did not hear, and went away whistling softly to himself. Across the road the baby was still crying dismally in some stuffy room. The wailing rose and fell with the dull monotony of despair.

The man and girl had drawn nearer. The girl walked a little in front, although the two were obviously together. She was undeniably pretty, in spite of the fact that her features were not good; her nose was too small, and her red lips a little too full, but the general effect of her face was pleasing. It was only on a closer scrutiny that one saw how clumsily the powder had been applied. She wore a short dress of white spotted muslin, with a blue satin sash; her stockings and shoes also were white. She glanced anxiously from side to side as though in search of something.

A few paces behind followed the man. He was middle-aged, and inclined to corpulence; his complexion was full-blooded, and his profile fleshy and formless. His legs were short, and he hurried along in the glaring sunlight with a breathless, apologetic shuffle. From time to time he pushed back his hat to remove the perspiration which glistened upon his forehead.

They passed the group of boys, who were now staring sadly at the pavement. One of them had dropped the jar, and the minnows writhed upon the hot ground.

Again the stout man came out of the greengrocer's shop and looked up the street. He moved furtively towards the girl as she neared the doorway, and as she was passing he spoke quietly.

"A room, dear?" he said, tentatively.

The girl turned, smiling; her companion followed. With languid interest the constable watched the three disappear into the void of the shop door.

Outside in the sultry street one of the boys had filled a new jar with water, and his comrades, amid shrill guffaws, were trying to replace the dying fish.

James Duckworth Wood.

Epilogue.

Your lines, oh most inane of plays,
Drop into silence, mid the beat
Of clamping sticks and drumming feet,
And all your hearers go their ways.

A moment, as the back-cloth sways
Up to the flies—then all retreat,
Dame, prince, and beggar, and the fleet
Light ladies, of the winsome phrase.

Then silence and pale emptiness
Creep in the wings, and beauty then
Unheeded at the watchman's heels,
Twines the pale walls in a caress,
Makes mystery and fear—as when
Some thing new-born awakes and feels
The wide world—and its loneliness.

G. T. Dunlop.

The Love Potion.

I HATED the house! I hated its smug-faced respectability. I hated the very paint upon its walls. Sixteen nights in succession I had tramped up and down before it, from sunset until the first faint blushes of dawn had filled with watery blood the well of sky at the eastern end of the street. It was pock-marked! The dirty rain drops had bespattered its sickly yellow coating with blotches until, with its faded scarlet blinds, it looked like the blear-eyed monster that it was.

Those blotches were devilish. They seemed to stare at one; they seemed to give the house a million eyes. Once I went over and touched one of them with my finger; then I took my pocket-handkerchief and tried to rub it away; but the bilious smear of cleansed yellowish paint seemed more awful still

I cursed myself. I cursed my mental attitude. It was grotesque, unusual, impossible! I tried to vision my little garret where I had laid recumbent, night after night, with a book upon my pallet-bed, and my face between my hands, reading and dreaming of life as I had thought it was.

I loved that little garret! Ever since I had read Souvertre's *Philosophe sous le toit* at school I had sworn that I would, one day, have a garret of my own; and I had kept my vow and was content.

I tried to think of that garret in the hope of restoring within myself that mental peace which, until the incredible happened, I had always enjoyed

With an effort I recalled it. I could see each piece of furniture—the little deal table, the painted Windsor chair, the set of book-shelves suspended by means of string from a nail in the wall. I saw the roof-beam with its whitewash flaking off, and the little skylight through which, many a night, I had watched the white stars shine upon me. But I could get no peace. Even the visualisation of my room was insufficient to cast its glamour over me

I had known that it *would* happen; and yet, now that my prevision had been justified, I could not believe it. I suppose that it is because of the impossibility of transporting ourselves from one emotional state to another that we find it so difficult to realise that we shall one day be, both in mind and body, so different from our former selves. But I had had no illusions. I knew; yet, having proved my knowledge true, I wondered.

Drake had come to me as he often used to do. He had fumbled his way up my dark and dusty staircase and, with a kick upon the

door, had demanded admittance. Then he had seated himself upon my box, had stuck his hands into his pockets and had stretched out his legs before him.

There was something very attractive to me about Drake ; for one thing he understood me, and that is what few others have been able to do. That night, in particular, I was especially pleased that he had come. I had not seen him for nearly a week, and felt the need of his virility.

He sat there looking at me as I continued my reading. When I looked up from my book he said, "Dear old boy, you're laying up the very devil of a time for yourself!"

I think I smiled at him, and he smiled too ; but there was something wistful in his look, as though he wished to save me from what both he and I knew must inevitably be.

"Yes, I know," I replied, "but it is worth it!"

He moved his head slowly. "I wonder," he said.

He lighted his pipe. I was already smoking. "Tell me," he said, after a few moments, "what makes you so sure of it?"

"There is no need to tell—you know it, too," I said.

"Yes ; but tell me, nevertheless," he insisted.

"Lifted up to Heaven and cast down to Hell," I replied.

He nodded his head and puffed at his pipe, blowing great clouds of smoke.

"Yes, that's it," he said at last, "it's a damned complicated world, Trine, and the most utterly useless thing is Knowledge. We know and yet we cannot avoid. We who know can no more avoid than the millions of others who do not know."

"That's why I am so happy," I said.

He glanced at me, and I saw an amused twinkle in his eyes.

"Yes, you're in Heaven now ; but wait until you're in Hell."

"Come and look at the stars," I said.

We stood beneath the skylight for some time, watching the pale-blue points of light and the filmy clouds drifting across them. Then he laid his hand upon my shoulder. "It will be a woman," he said.

"I suppose so," I agreed.

We watched the stars again in silence. Their movements were symbolic. There we read the laws controlling Being.

"It is as inevitable as the movements of the stars," he said. "You were quite right, Trine, to say 'lifted to Heaven and cast down to Hell'; that is always so. Great souls see both Heaven and Hell ; they have lived in either place. But I am interested and excited, and, perhaps, even amused—yes, just a little amused—when I see the great laws working themselves out. I feel inclined

to go to all mankind and say, 'there, I told you so!' To be a prophet is the easiest of trades!"

"And you prophesy my downfall through a woman?"

"Decidedly, my friend, how else? Have not all dreamers fallen through women? Do you not know 'tis because of our sex we see the stars?"

"Let us go for a walk," I said, "I can work no more to-night."

We went down the crooked stairs and out into the street. There were few people about, and the thoroughfare was badly lighted; the flickering of the yellow gas-jets seemed to render the byeway darker than it actually was, by casting confused dancing shadows upon our path. I had a feeling of uneasiness and gloom, as though a great catastrophe awaited me in the near distance. I think Drake felt it, too; for he spoke but little, and we walked along absorbed in our own thoughts.

I went with him as far as his lodgings, and there, instead of going in with him, as I usually did, I wished him good night.

He held out his hand and looked at me as though he saw something in my face which was strange, and which he was unable to understand. His look irritated me; for some inexplicable reason I was annoyed. "Good night," I said; and, shaking hands with him, turned sharply upon my heel, and went away.

II.

I first noticed her in the cheap little café where I had my tea. I seated myself at the marble-topped table and ordered a cup of tea and a roll-and-butter. Then I pulled a newspaper from my pocket and began to read.

The café was very full. An orchestra was rendering some Strauss music; the waitresses were hurrying to and fro, and their movements, though noiseless, seemed in some extraordinary way to commingle with the babel of voices and to render them more clamant and obtrusive. There was, as it were, a fusing of sound and motion which narcotised one.

Presently a young lady came to my table and made as though she would seat herself opposite to me. It was the only other vacant place in the café, or I do not think she would have taken it; for she hesitated before doing so, and I caught her looking at me with that enquiring glance which seemed to be seeking to know what manner of man I was.

Apparently her inspection of me was satisfactory; for, after a moment, she took the vacant chair and gave her order to the waitress who came to receive it.

I cannot say that I was even faintly stirred by her presence, at any rate at first. I was, I think, unconscious of it—or at most subconscious; for I was deeply interested in a review of a new book of poems which was being much discussed. After she had been seated there for perhaps five or six minutes I felt an extraordinary change come over my whole being, as though my personality was undergoing dissolution.

It was not that I suddenly became aware of her presence and had been attracted by it; it was not that I had awakened to the fact that she was beautiful. The change in me was so subtle and illusive that it almost baffles description. It seemed to have no relation to her whatever; it seemed rather to relate to the whole of my past life, to the whole of my former pursuits. Yet although I could not see how it was connected with her, I knew that in some mysterious way it was so. My soul was spilled! It is the only phrase which is able to express, at all adequately, the disturbance which I felt within me.

I think she knew it, too; for I was conscious of her sudden enmity towards me. I noticed a look, almost of fear, which came into her eyes, as though she had suddenly seen my soul depart. She moved her feet nervously and half-turned her chair, so that she could not see my face; and after a moment or two she got up from her seat, and leaving her tea half-finished, left the café.

Neither of us had spoken a word. There was no outward reason for her perturbation. No look or sign upon my part had, I am convinced, given her cause for her evident agitation. It was something occult, something more spiritual, something more impalpable. At her coming we had been spiritual affinities. When she went she fled from me in fear

I noticed a book upon the table; she had left it in her haste. Inside the cover I found her name and address, and I at once paid my bill and hurried out of the shop in the hope of overtaking her. I did so just as she was entering the house—that devilish-looking building with the pock-marked paint and the faded scarlet blinds—and, raising my hat, I went to her holding the book in my hand.

"You left it in the café," I said with a smile, holding it towards her. But I felt my face contract into horrible lines and creases, and I knew that my smile was hateful.

Her face became sheet-white. I saw her shrink away from me as though she had been stricken by an icy blast of wind. Then she seemed suddenly to regain courage, and, snatching the book from my hand, jerked out a quick "thank you," and ran indoors.

How long I stood staring at the house I do not know; but when at last I moved away the street was deserted, except for a solitary policeman who eyed me suspiciously.

I walked slowly homewards, and on my way I saw the stars. Horrid little devils' eyes they were, that seemed to bore me through and through with virulence. I spat at them!

III.

I could not understand the pale-blue beam of light that cut my room in two, and fell upon the wall beyond my bed. There is an affinity between men and things which, at times, is so close that matter and soul commingle and spirit can converse with flesh. I had often experienced this. It seemed, at times, that the very stones would talk with me. I questioned them and they answered my questions. It was more than a subjective experience; the spirit of the stone became articulate, and my spirit understood it.

So it had been with that beam of light, which poured through a hole above the window and painted on the garret wall a pale-blue spot. I had often lain awake and watched the pencil of star-tinged light with the dancing beam-motes floating in it; and I knew that it was friendly to me. I spoke to it as I spoke to sticks and stones and trees and moss, and it answered me and told me all its secrets.

But that night as I lay upon my bed and looked at it I knew that I understood no more. It was complicated and confused; it had no soul at all

My thoughts went from it and I thought of myself. There was something in my soul quite strange, something I had never known before. Every fibre of my being was alive; the pulses of my body flowed with fire; the aching of my brain bewildered thought.

I would not confess, even to myself, that I knew. But I did know! I knew that the thing had come, the thing we had talked of, the thing we had dreaded, the thing we had known would come! I loved!

It was a love that was merely physical; it had nought of the spirit in it; it was all absorbing, all destroying. It devoured my whole nature and rendered me incapable of ought else. I had seen her but once, and the change that had taken place in me had been immediate and assertive. I loved her, and she must and should return my love! I knew that she feared me. I knew that the feeling that she had for me was more akin to hate than love; but that knowledge intensified my passion. I would possess her body and soul!

I went the next night to her house, and waited about outside, hoping to see her; but no one either entered or left the building, and then it was that I began to hate it for shutting her from my sight. Sixteen nights in succession I walked up and down on the footpath, and only twice did I see her in that time. Each time she

caught sight of me she evinced so much fear that her body shook and her face paled. I smiled at seeing her terror, knowing that she, no more than I could avoid the destiny in store

On the seventeenth day I was passing the café where I had first met her ; and as I was about to enter she came out. Upon seeing me she gave a little cry, and darted down the street so quickly that she was out of sight before I could follow. I went inside and ordered some tea, knowing that it would be useless to attempt to overtake her, and that my only hope of finding her again that night would be to take up my usual station outside her house. This I resolved to do, and whilst having my tea I questioned the waitress, who had seen her go out, concerning her.

Of her occupation I could learn nothing. One thing only I discovered, each day she took tea in the room upstairs.

I wondered that I had not thought of this before. I had had my tea at the café several times since my first encounter with her ; but, never seeing her, I had concluded that her presence there, on that occasion, had been a casual call. I found, however, that she usually went to the café for tea, but that two or three weeks ago she had abandoned the lower café in favour of the upper room.

I discerned that the moment was near. . . .

IV.

As I turned the corner of the street in which her house was situate I heard a hoarse chuckle behind me. There was something exceedingly malignant in it, something which seemed to freeze the blood and to clutch at the heart-strings. Turning sharply I saw a little old woman, with bent back and withered face, standing at the door of the corner shop. She leaned upon a thick stick, and her knotted and bony hands shook as with ague ; her long and dirty nails were claw-like ; the crumpled cap she wore upon her head could not conceal her baldness. I looked at her angrily.

" Did you laugh at me ? " I asked.

She chuckled again. " No, no, maister," she said, " I didna laugh at thee ; he—he—he—I didna laugh at thee ! " She put out her hand and touched my sleeve with her grimy finger.

" Come inside, maister," she said, " come inside. I have something thou'rt needing ; something I have in my shop thou'lt give bright siller for."

I looked at her surprised, and glanced at the little shop window which was filled with roots and seeds and herbs. I had noticed the herbalist's shop many times before, and had remarked its ugliness and disreputable appearance.

"You have nothing I need," I said. "Why should I come within?"

"Ay, but I have, I have," she chuckled. "I know thy need, my lad. I know thy need."

"And what is my need, mother?" I asked her, seeing her earnestness and wishing to know her intent.

She grinned and sucked her gums, chuckling to herself the while. Then she put her withered hand upon my arm and drew me in.

"Ay, I know thy need, lad; thy need is love! Have I not seen thee a-walkin' the street night after night a-seekin' her? Have I not watched thy face and seen the fire o' love a-burnin' in it? I know, my lad, I know!"

There was a look of cunning in her eyes, and I seemed to feel the venom of her soul.

"But you cannot compel love," I said. I had followed her into the shop and stood before the little counter with the bundles of herbs upon it.

"But I can, my lad; but I can," she replied. She was fumbling about in a dark corner of the shop, and presently held a tiny phial towards me, containing an amber coloured liquid. I took it from her and held it to the light. It sparkled with the glow of Hell!

"Tell me, what is this?" I said.

She looked greedily at me and held out her hand for money.

"A potion to compel her love," she replied.

V.

In the breast-pocket of my coat the phial lay secure. I pressed it to my body to make sure that it was there, and the hardness of its convex surface seemed to burn my flesh. My skin tingled beneath it as though some radiation from the amber fluid had excited it. Not for a moment did I doubt its potency; not once did I question its effect. I would have believed in anything that might have given me her love. I was exultant, and stopped for a moment in an entry so that I might look, once again, at the liquid which possessed such power. It was strange to think that in those drops of golden water her soul and body were involved! Strange to think that through her veins this liquid love would flow! A million fancies came to me; it seemed already that she felt my hold upon her. It seemed already that the fluid shewed her mind. As I looked at it queer little dancing bubbles rose from nowhere and burst before they reached the top. Little spiral columns of disturbance moved about within the tiny glass. The potion was

instinct with life ; and the life was hers ! Each little bubble seemed to me a thought ; each spiral current typified a fear. In some way or other her soul was already entangled in the phial ; already I knew her to be mine !

I saw her the next night enter the café, and I followed her to the upper room. She did not see me, and took her seat at a table close to one of the windows which overlooked the street, whilst I secured a place at a table in a corner at the back of the room, and from there I observed her.

I could not watch her patiently ; her beauty inflamed me. Where she sat the light of sunset fell upon her hair and wrapped a warmth around her which intensified her charms. Once I arose from my seat intending to take the vacant place at her table ; then I remembered the phial in my pocket, and seated myself again to await the appointed time.

It was not long in coming. The waitress who was serving her placed her tea upon a side-table close by me, whilst she went to attend to another customer ; and, seizing my opportunity, I emptied the contents of the phial into her cup. Immediately afterwards she caught sight of me, and in her eyes again I saw a look of fear.

She seemed about to move, but the waitress came and took her tea to her ; then she turned her eyes away from me, and with an effort commenced to eat, as though conscious of being watched. When she had drunk her tea I knew that the time had come

VI.

She turned her eyes slowly towards me, and they burned. There was a fire in them such as I had never seen before ; there was boldness in them, and passion and enticement. Even her lips were luscious—more inviting. Her whole attitude seemed suddenly to change ; her form assumed a garb of sensuousness ; her body pleaded for the love of man

I left my place at the back of the room and went to her table. I seated myself before her and looked into her eyes ; and as I looked I felt her foot press mine, and knew that she had given herself to me.

I returned her foot's caress, and I saw the blood mount into her cheeks. Her bosom rose and fell with pent-up passion ; her hand upon the table clutched the cloth. I reached forward and put my hand on hers ; she did not move, and I felt it hot and wet beneath my own. Her eyes sought mine, and mine sought hers. We did not speak

In other parts of the room the people took their tea. I remember thinking, even then, how strange it was; how unconcerned these men and women were; how practical; how passionless! I noticed a man with hair almost white sitting at a table by himself; and I looked in a wondering way at a ridge around his head made by the pressure of his hat.

I noticed a man with a mole on his cheek, and I wondered why hairs grew from moles. I noticed a tiny child picking the currants from her cake, and I smiled at her delinquency.

Yet all the time I saw nothing—nothing but the glowing eyes before me. My own eyes ached with the pressure of their gaze. I gripped her hand until I gave her pain.

"Come," I said, seizing her bill and rising from my seat, "I must speak with you."

I paid for her tea and mine. Then she followed me downstairs and out into the street.

VII.

I sat behind my bolted door and listened. It was raining, and the rain was spitting on the skylight. It was quite dark, and I did not light my lamp. Once a vivid flash of lightning lit up the deepest corners of my garret with a kind of luminous blackness, so that I could see the edges of the things that stood therein. The light made little drops of fire of the water on the glass; the whiteness of an open book upon my table remained in sight long after dark had wrapped me round again. I sat there upon a stool with my fingers interlocked and my teeth biting into my lips, and in my mind I said the selfsame thing.

"I hope she will not come again to-night! I hope she will not come!" I said.

Then I paused and listened to the rain. Pshoo—pshoo—pshoo—pitter—pitter—pitter—pshoo—oo—oo—"I hope she will not come again to-night! I hope she will not come!"

My thoughts sang with the singing of the rain; they chanted a low monotonous dirge—a harmony of gloom. And the rain and wind commingled with them and tinged them with a melancholy dread.

But I thought she would come! She had come each night for how many nights I could not remember. But it had been many—a great many. And she had remained with me; we had loved; we had taken our fill of love . . .

Was that she? I thought I heard a footstep on the stairs . . . No, no; it must have been the wind! How I wish the rain would cease! How I wish it would stop its intolerable pelting! Then

I could hear her when she comes—if, indeed, she does come ; but I hope not ! I hope not !

I listened again for many minutes, and several times I thought I heard her ; but she did not come, and I was glad again.

I was glad because the last time I had seen her face afresh. I had seen the passion in it ; I had seen the fire of love burn in her eyes. But it had given me no warmth. I had felt no glow responsive to its heat. I had wished her to go, desired her to go, prayed that she might go ; but she had desired my love, and I had no love left to give. She had twined her arms about me and had kissed me on the hair and eyes and lips

How was it that this change had come to me ? How was it I no longer burned with love ? Its going had been as sudden as its coming. I had been kissing her lips and fondling her hands and face and hair, and we had been pouring love from eyes to eyes. And then

Then I had heard a bird sing ! A bird sang in the night ! And its liquid notes were mellow and sweet ; they flowed around my heart and held my soul in thrall. Tears came to my eyes and flowed down my cheeks. There was an aching in my breast, and the pain of it was keen. The bird still sang and my tears still flowed. And as it sang the pain grew more intense until it tortured me

Then I saw a star ! I had not seen a star for long—so long. All I had seen had been little devils' eyes glaring at me, piercing me, hating me ! But now I saw a star, my star ; and as I looked at it the pain broke through my heart and tore my soul in two.

And then Then I sprang to my feet and flung her from me, and I went to the skylight and looked at the star and prayed and said, "O, little star, I love thee ! Little star I love thee !" And I could not say more, for my tears were choking me. Only I stood there and prayed, "Little star I love thee ! Little star I love thee !"

When I turned she was gone, and I closed and locked the door

VIII.

I sat within my room awaiting her and listening to the rain. I heard her footsteps coming up the stairs. Outside my door she paused, and I heard that she was sobbing. Then she tapped gently ; but I did not answer her, so she tried the handle of the door and found the door was locked.

"Will you not let me in ?" she said. "I wish to speak to you."

There was something pleading in her voice, something so tender that I felt my heart respond.

"No, I will not," I said. "No, I will not let you in."

I thought the sobbing ceased, and I thought I heard a cry as though of joy.

"Are you then so changed?" she said.

And I remembered the past days and said, "Yes, I am so changed!"

There was silence and the rain ceased, and through the skylight I saw the stars again. And when I saw them I prayed my prayer and said once more, "Little star I love thee! Little star I love thee!"

Then there was another tap at the door, and I heard her say, "I, too, love the stars!"

And I knew by her voice that it was so; so I let her in.

"Do not light your lamp," she said; "let us sit here, under the skylight, beneath the stars, and in the morning, before the day breaks, we will go out—out into the light!"

"Let me look into your eyes again," I said, "they are very full of love."

I looked into her eyes, and by the light of the stars I saw that her soul had rest.

"You, too, are clean," she said; "you, too, have been washed by the stars."

"I, too, am clean," I said. And we held each other's hands and ceased to speak.

After a long while she looked at me again. "We are in Heaven, now," she said, "and we have been in Hell; let us go into the light whilst Heaven's peace is on us."

I looked at her and smiled and said, "The silver on my pistol shines with starlight."

Then I lighted my lamp and seated myself at my table and wrote. And now all is written. I kiss my books and quench the flame and take her hand. And now we go—into the light!

Godfrey Welch.

Columbine.

Columbine dances.

The musicians fiddle a gay tune,

They stare at her with faces pale, like patches of moonlight.

In the orchestra all is dim.

Hidden in the murky gloom a little fiddler loves the dancer

She does not know.

Columbine dances.

Columbine dances.

Her heart is sad although she smiles

She has to dance and smile the while her heart is breaking,

It sobs and weeps within her for love of Harlequin.

She dances . . . the music waves around her,

The people stare.

The air is hot, it throbs with sorrow for poor Columbine.

The people stare.

Harlequin is far away with another.

Columbine dances.

Columbine dances.

Pierrot with pinched lost face waits in the wings,

The music blares . . . the lights flare.

Pierrot is sad for love of Columbine,

But she has love for only Harlequin :

She does not know that Pierrot loves.

He dare not tell . . . no one knows.

His face is pinched and white,

He weeps.

Columbine dances.

Columbine dances.

Harlequin is in the wings.

Still poor Columbine dances around the stage.

She sees.

Pierrot watches with great, sad eyes.

The little fiddler longs for her to look at him,

She sees only Harlequin.

He is with another . . . the people do not know,

The music blares the lights flare.

Harlequin goes away, away with the other.

Columbine is sad. The little jerky fiddler is sad.

Pierrot is sad.

The lights grow dim.

Columbine dances.

Percival Hinton.

Moon.

Beyond this opening in the trees,
The great moon looks so still and bright—
Lonely, and yet content to give
Its gentle, wreathing light.

O moon, your flood of living sheen
Fills all the starry room of space.

And here in this little orchard place,
The fragrant blossom of the plum
Hangs in the air like phantom snow,
Whilst on the dew-white grass below
The slender shadows interlace—
The shadows, purple, dumb.

Moon,
Send your softly whelming flow
And bathe an upturned mortal face.

Philip Wayne.

The Sub-Conscious Element in Poetry.

IN discussing the subject of Poetry the majority of even her sincere lovers generally confine their attention to the features and complexion of the Muse, or to the fashion of her garments, which change as other fashions change, rather than to her essential characteristics, which are apt to baffle every attempt at analysis. It is indeed extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get at the heart of Poetry, to "ascertain the causes of things" in this elusive region, to locate the source of the thrill which vibrates down the ages in certain passages of poetry whose transcendent beauty is beyond dispute. Susceptibility to that thrill, which forms the ultimate test of the quality of poetry, must be taken for granted in any investigation into its origin and nature; for it is impossible to communicate the inner life of an art to those who are not responsive to its appeal. Imagine a man to whom music is meaningless asking a great violinist how he produced his most exquisite musical effects. To such an one the maestro could only reply—"Well, with my right hand I draw the bow across the strings, at the same time pressing them with the left hand at certain points—and you hear the result."

And even when the enquirer is familiar with the technique of an art, something remains which the master finds it difficult to communicate to another—and that something is the living soul of the art. To ask Shelley how he wrote his "Ode to the West Wind" would be like asking Nature how she achieved the masterpiece of a particular sunset. When all that can be has been explained, the very essence of sunset and poem alike, and the response which they evoke in the human soul, remain a mystery. Physical science declares that everything consists of inconceivably small units of electricity, whirling around each other at inconceivable speed, though never actually in contact; that the faster the pace, the harder the substance, and so forth. But why do the electrons whirl; why don't they keep still? "IGNORAMUS; IGNORABIMUS." Beyond every physical explanation there lies the ultimate mystery of existence, and beyond every analysis of beauty the ultimate mystery of our sense of beauty. Up to a certain point the colours of the sunset may be explained by the operation of optical laws, acting upon different degrees of density and humidity of atmosphere; and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" by the laws of grammar, syntax, and prosody, acting upon an ear which takes delight in

rhythm and assonance. But in each case there remains the ultimate mystery, "the sense of tears in mortal things," "the poet's consecration and the dream."

But though we shall never succeed in plucking out the heart of the mystery of beauty, any more than of life itself, yet some of the less obvious processes in the production of poetry may be studied with interest and advantage. It is true only in a limited sense that "we murder to dissect." The anatomist, when poring over the convolutions of the human brain or the complexities of the muscular system, is not for the moment concerned with the wisdom of Plato or the grace of Helen of Troy; but I have not observed that doctors are less susceptible to human wisdom and beauty than those ignorant of anatomy; or that the simple charm of the wild flower is less captivating to the botanist than to a person unacquainted with its structure and classification. It is not analysis, but the spirit in which analysis is undertaken, which makes the difference.

One day last winter I visited a certain secluded spot near Kidderminster, to view the wonderful prospect across the Severn Valley and the undulations of Wyre Forest to the Clee Hills and the Wrekin—a memorable picture. I will not attempt to describe the beauty of the winter landscape, the spacious dignity of its repose, the subtlety of its colouring, the pathetic harmonies of the cloudland which seemed almost an exhalation from the hills and forest; still less will I attempt to describe my feelings as I gazed on the great scene. But of this I am sure; that the glory was not diminished by my knowledge that I was standing on a hill composed of Permian Conglomerate, that an "inlier" of Old Red Conglomerate lay between me and the Severn, that Coal Measures underlay the sombre splendour of the forest, and that the mystic loveliness of the distant Clee Hills was the grave-mound of an ancient volcano. Far from this knowledge degrading the nobility of the scene, the landscape assumed a majesty of peace all the greater because the knowledge enabled me to reconstruct something of the conflicts and revolutions of its remote past.

And there is another way in which the heart of Poetry will reward inspection. "All paths lead to Rome"; the humblest object has relations with infinity. If once we have traced the genesis of a noble poem from an apparently ignoble, or at least commonplace origin, the most ordinary object will henceforth become more significant. But of the process by which a deposition of rich thought and feeling gathers around an apparently worthless trifle, who shall speak? We may name it Association of Ideas, Mental Chemistry, or refer it to the sub-conscious action of the brain—but all such

explanations are only so many labels ; the process itself remains a mystery.

It is so with all spiritual processes ; from such lowly beginnings what wonderful results ! Just as in the marvellous chemistry of Nature a bit of irritating grit in the shell of an oyster may become a pearl, so in the marvellous chemistry of the human mind a poetic pearl may form around the most unpromising material. The nucleus of a poem is often a queer, even forbidding object, as in the case of Browning's masterpiece, "The Ring and the Book" ; but Jove's eagle itself was once an ugly little speck in a small white sphere, incurved upon itself, and nearly all eye. The callow chick in no way suggests the grace and glory of the full-fledged swan ; the statue grows lump by lump around its ungainly core of iron, but it is the finishing touches of the sculptor's hand, baffling analysis, which chiefly count. Literature teems with examples of the potential sublimity of lowly things. A notable example is "The Toys," by Coventry Patmore, a poem in which the most commonplace, domestic trivialities are suffused with noble emotion and transfigured into an image of the Divine. It is the seeing eye, the feeling heart, which are the first essentials in poetry ; without these the highest technical skill is but "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." In one sense there is nothing "common or unclean" unless we ourselves are so. Everything rings with significance unless we ourselves are deaf.

The mental process now under discussion may be compared with the process in Nature which is known as Concretion, that obscure process by which the nodules of iron and flint are formed around some trivial nucleus—around any bit of matter. But there is another mental process, perhaps more wonderful still, which operates in the production of poetry, and which is analogous to those mysterious processes in Nature which we call Precipitation and Crystallisation. For a long time the mind holds an idea or feeling as it were in solution ; let the mental temperature become raised to a certain point, and at the same time let the mind receive some adequate shock—and lo ! suddenly the thought, the feeling, hitherto held in solution, is precipitated, is crystallized, into a form which surprises the poet even more than it surprises the world. It seems to come from nowhere, like the clouds which form in an apparently clear sky. This is what is commonly called Inspiration ; and it has the peculiarity of appearing to come from without, not, as is really the case, from within the poet's own mind. Mozart used to maintain that it was not he who wrote his melodies, but that an angel whispered them to him ; and many a poet would tell the same tale. The second-best, and all below the second-best, of creative work, is

the result of conscious cerebration ; but the high-water mark of poetry is reached by the process of unconscious cerebration.

The "inspired" passage is achieved with perfect ease ; hence the poet's conviction that it comes from without, ready-made ; and because it is achieved with ease, it is marked by a sublime simplicity ; the intensity of the heat has fused all inessential ornament, has produced a clear white light. To vary the metaphor, it comes not clothed with elaborate ornament, but in utter nakedness. Setting aside certain poems which have survived by accident, it may be affirmed that such "inspired" passages occur in nearly all the poems which have stood the test of Time ; and it is by virtue of such passages that the poems still live. If a poem contains even one such passage, however short, then, provided that the poem as a whole is of fine workmanship, and has that distinctive quality which we call "style," it stands a chance of travelling with Time. It is such passages, sometimes a couplet, sometimes only a line, which have entered as quotations into the very fibre of our literature and have become household words among all who read and love and remember poetry. Our hearts leap when we encounter them. Remove them from Wordsworth, and much of the vast fabric of his work would crumble into dust.

But it may be asked :—How does this mental process, which produces with such ease the immortal phrase, operate ? That is the mystery. The psychologist is yet to be born who can fully explain it. As well ask how does each particle of precious metal come to segregate itself from other minerals in the sea and occupy the cleft in the particular rock where we find it ?—As well ask what is gravitation, what is consciousness ? We may observe the effects of Association of Ideas, but how the association is set up has never been determined.

Some years ago Dr. Alexander Hill, of Cambridge, delivered a public lecture on "The Brain as the Apparatus of Thought." He threw upon the screen a micro-photograph of a minute portion of the brain-substance, enormously magnified. It looked like an irregular tangle of spider's webs, punctuated here and there with tiny knots. "This," said Dr. Hill, "we suspect to be the apparatus of thought. We suspect ; we do not know. But how it works, how mathematical problems are solved, frauds are contrived, Acts of Parliament drafted, symphonies and dramas composed, by means of it, we can no more understand than an infant could understand how the Jacquard loom produces the lace which trims its clothing."

One thing is certain, however ; a high degree of mental temperature and a great intensity of mental pressure usually precede the output of the "inspired" passage, just as a high degree of heat and pressure are supposed to precede the process of the segregation

and crystallization of the precious metals in their lodes. Intense admiration, love, hate, joy—more often suffering—supply the heat and pressure. Suffering, in some form or other, is a potent factor. It is the crushed grape that yields the wine. But the wine, expressed by suffering, must undergo another mysterious process, fermentation, ere it becomes the vintage which comforts, exhilarates—and keeps.

Allusion has been made to simplicity of diction being one of the characteristics of the "inspired" passage. There is, however, another kind of simplicity which is not the outcome of an utterance almost breathless with excitement, but of an utterance guarded and deliberate; a studied simplicity which is the result of laborious pruning away of inessentials. Some of the most beautiful lyrics in the language have been produced by this means, their apparent artlessness being the highest achievement of the *Ars celare artem*. Take, for example, such an apparently spontaneous love-cry as "Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon." It is known that Burns wrote version after version of that little lyric before he succeeded in pruning it down to the irreducible minimum of expression in which it finally stood. Originally the second lines were longer, and were thickly studded with epithets, many of them appropriate enough, but inessential. Or take another example from the sister-art of Music. There is, perhaps, no simpler melody in the whole range of music than that which Beethoven wedded to the words of Schiller's "Ode to Joy" in the last movement of his Choral Symphony. There is a primeval grandeur about that wonderful tune like the nobly plain lines of a mountain or a Doric temple; its simplicity is such that we seem to have heard it in our cradle; it seems to date from "before the beginning of years"; it appears to be spontaneity itself. But what are the facts? We have Beethoven's own testimony that he was thoroughly worried in his attempts to attain the simplicity of that immortal tune. He wrote and rejected, re-wrote and modified, put it away disgusted, and returned to it, again and again; and, with grim humour, he introduces into the symphony, just before the confident entry of the mighty melody itself, a musical record of the trouble to which he had been put, and of the repeated angry rejections which he had inflicted on his own unsuccessful attempts. Probably it was the recognition of the labour involved in attaining such studied simplicity which in part led to the famous definition of genius as "an infinite capacity for taking pains." That is certainly one of the many aspects of genius, though genius is much more than that—or the words which thrill us to the heart would be more abundant.

Closely connected with simplicity of diction is the instinctive choice of organic ornament, in preference to mere embellishment,

which is evident in the most impressive passages of those writers to whom inspiration is generally ascribed. This aspect of the literary art is perhaps best approached by way of the kindred art of architecture. A homely illustration is afforded by a certain type of domestic architecture in which the ornamentation is truly organic, partaking of the very life and purpose of the building which it graces. The whole of that beautiful region which is bounded by Stratford-on-Avon, Cheltenham, Banbury, and Bath, 300 square miles of almost undefiled country, teems with buildings which are poems in stone. William Morris held the domestic architecture of the Cotswolds to be the best in the world ; it is impossible to conceive anything better ; whether it be a mansion, a farmhouse, or a cottage, nay, even a barn or hovel, almost every building breathes beauty. The simple dignity, the unaffected nobility of the outlines, cannot be surpassed ; and all the ornament, employed with an economy which marks the strongest art, is organic, is consonant with the purpose of the building ; nothing is inessential ; there is not a scrap of extraneous ornament added for the sake of mere ostentation. To pass from Corporation Street, Birmingham, to High Street, Chipping Campden, is, architecturally speaking, to pass from hell to heaven. Such a village as Swalecliffe, near Banbury, is an exquisite indictment of all that is false and vulgar in modern architecture.

Consider the details of the ornament, so sparingly, so satisfyingly employed. Over each mullioned window, like the eyebrow over the eye, projects a simple ornament, known as a " label " ; but it is organic, essential ; it is not mere embellishment ; it serves a definite purpose, like the hood-moulding over a church-window, viz., to shed off the rain. The beautiful projecting stones which cap the chimneys serve to protect the chimney itself from what geologists call " aerial denudation." The typical Cotswold finial, four little gables, the ridges of which form a cross—an enchanting ornament, at once rich and plain in its effect—serves to shield the angles of the masonry from damp and decay. And so on throughout ; no useless decoration, no meaningless display. It grows upon you, it comforts, it satisfies ; and when you return to your work amid the florid inanities of Victorian architecture, it makes you feel at once an exile, and a missionary.

Or turning from domestic architecture to naval construction, who has not felt his heart beat faster, his bosom swell with joy, at the sight—now only too rare—of a ship in full sail ? It is a complex delight, containing many elements with which for the moment we are not concerned ; but among them is one source of satisfaction which is apt to be overlooked—namely, the beauty, beyond all criticism, which arises from the fact that every line and curve of hull

and rigging fulfils a useful purpose, is part and parcel of the very life and soul of the ship. Not a superfluous spar or stitch. The very figure-head is essentially a finial, protecting the prow. The beauty is wholly organic, like the beauty of the sea-gull of whom it seems a greater sister. It is because the ship seems from stem to stern, from water-line to pennon, a living organism, that its loveliness is so entirely satisfying. It is similar with the beauty of wild animals; the consummate grace of the cat is largely due to the economy with which means are adjusted to ends, in its form and movements. In every art the highest success is reached only when its creations in their simple dignity approach the perfection of Nature herself, in whom all beauty is essential and organic. This is the hardest and the latest lesson which the artist usually learns, and it can only be learnt by reverent self-sacrifice. The conceited artist, who is more anxious to express himself than to portray his subject, will never learn it. Compare the florid redundancy of even Shakespeare's earlier manner with the noble plainness of his later style. Compare the few strong lines and economy of ornament in Keats' later poems with the flamboyance of "Endymion"—and Keats died young; it is certain that, had he lived to a ripe age, he would have achieved more, not less, simplicity of style. George Eliot remarks that it is easy enough to draw a monster; you have only to exaggerate a feature here, a member there, and the thing is done; but to draw a perfectly harmonious, natural, animal is a most difficult feat. It is comparatively easy to pile Pelion upon Ossa in the way of magniloquent epithets and gorgeous imagery, but there is a greater and more gracious way than this, to which few artists attain, "the kings of song, who found—a child." The lower slopes of Parnassus are richly clothed with glorious growths, but the highest peaks are bare. The fusion of all the rich colours of the spectrum result in a clear simplicity of light; it is the white glow, not the red, which implies the greatest heat; the utmost intensity of feeling is expressed by silence; it is the kneeling soul which soars.

Let us take one or two examples of poetic expression which, all will agree, belong to the highest instances of recorded utterance:—

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith."

Observe; not a single adjective till we reach the last two words, and then the childlike epithet "little."

Now see what happens to this inspired passage when an uninspired word-monger attempts to improve upon its sublime simplicity. I grieve to relate that the vandal in question was no

less than James Thomson, author of "The Seasons," who ought to have known better. This is his paraphrase:—note the epithets, inessential, inorganic—the result being a monument of literary vulgarity, suggestive of certain sepulchral memorials of the same period which deface the walls of Westminster Abbey.

"Observe the rising lily's snowy grace,
Observe the various vegetable race;
They neither toil nor spin, but careless grow;
Yet see how warm they blush, how bright they glow,
What regal vestments can with them compare?
What king so shining, or what queen so fair?"

Reversing the process, listen to this paraphrase of an inspired passage describing nightfall; it is descriptive art of a kind, but not of the highest kind:—

"Thou dost withdraw the illuminating rays of the diurnal orb, and Cimmerian shadows supervene; at whose approach those fearsome monsters, which lurk in the appalling gloom of the impenetrable forest, stealthily emerge. The maned monarchs of the animal kingdom, causing the rocks to reverberate with fearful clamour, as they anticipate the capture of their shuddering victims, expatiate in search of that sustenance which, in the mysterious dispensation of Providence, they are permitted to devour."

That is somewhat after the manner of James Thomson at his worst, and is not a little suggestive of the besetting sin of those great, but occasionally pompous writers, Gibbon and Samuel Johnson.

Now hear how the same thing is described in the sublime language of the Psalms, sublime in its economy, its simplicity, that Prayer-Book version which we owe to Miles Coverdale—a man who has laid English literature under an incalculable debt of gratitude:—

"Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do move. The lions roaring after their prey do seek their meat from God."

Notice the absence of adjectives, the massiveness, the nakedness, the Doric grandeur of the language. There is not a word of more than two syllables, and the last eight words are all old-English monosyllables.

The last time I met the late Churton Collins was on a memorable evening, only a few weeks before his death, when he was entertaining a small party of literary friends. The conversation happened to lead up to this very subject, and I quoted the foregoing passage as one which conformed to what I held to be one of the highest canons of the literary art. His face lighted up with a sudden blaze of energy; he leapt from his chair and shouted "Why, the Prayer-Book version of the Psalms is the high-water mark of the English language!" I concur with the opinion of my learned and lamented friend.

Or take a modern instance, from Swinburne, a master of magniloquence. When Swinburne piles Pelion upon Ossa he is impressive enough in all conscience, and few there be who can altogether resist the spell of his superb grandiosity ; but Swinburne at his highest forsakes his superabundance of adjectives, and rises to a simplicity which is far more impressive. Who does not feel the power of the first four lines of that noble chorus in "Atalanta in Calydon."

" Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of Man
Time, with a gift of tears,
Grief, with a glass that ran."

Not an epithet.

And then the solemn close :—

" He weaves, and is clothed with derision,
Sows, and he shall not reap ;
His life is a watch or a vision,
Between a sleep and a sleep."

Again, not an epithet.

A rather over-decorated lady to whom, with perilous boldness, I was recently preaching the gospel of simplicity in attire, objected that organic ornament in dress was unattainable by most persons because it was so expensive ; it demanded first-rate material and highly skilful cutting, with uncommon dignity and grace in the wearer. Precisely ; and the verse which can afford to reject the meretricious attractions of inessential ornament, of mere embellishment, is also very expensive—expensive in thought, expensive in emotion, expensive in labour ; its material—what William Sharp calls "the fundamental brain-stuff"—must be strong and sound ; its emotion must be deep and genuine ; and what gain it would be if nine-tenths of the works of art, whether music, poetry, fiction, or architecture, which rely on mere extraneous embellishment, were utterly abolished. So much work that is turgid and florid, and therefore essentially weak and poor, abounds, and I suspect will continue to abound, because of the ignorance and shallowness of the public, because of the cheap striving-after-effect of artists insufficiently equipped with the knowledge which is power, and the self-restraint which is artistic righteousness—so much sorry stuff confronts us wherever we turn, that one is tempted to wish some divine cataclysm, some consuming fire from Heaven, would descend, and suddenly destroy these monuments of misguided labour. Time will assuredly reduce them to dust ; meanwhile they cumber the ground, permitted for a season by the large tolerance of the Poet of poets, the Maker of makers.

Alfred Hayes.

Reverie.

Are they then lost, those days whose memory
Clings at your heart with such regretful pain,
Or in some distant dream place do they lie
Where you shall find the olden joys again ?

So, though you vainly seek to grasp once more
The fleeting robe of Youth's past history,
Your feet shall one day tread the ancient shore
And your ears catch its wave-sung melody.

There are the gorse-grown moors whose fresh, sweet breath
Came heather-scented through the summer nights,
And sun-browned bracken on the wind-swept heath,
And mountain streams that sparkle down the heights ;

And cool, undying woods, and meadows deep
With sweet old flowers, and waving feather grass
Such as the children love, and hillocks steep
Across whose slopes the shadowed cloud shapes pass.

There shall you lie, breast deep in daffodils,
And primrose stars, and violets blue and white,
While some old song your listening spirit fills,
Sung by some bird, with all the old delight.

Fields haystrewn, where your childhood loved to go,
Scent the warm air, and swaying, laden wains
Pass slowly where the popped cornfields blow,
Down the white winding of the hedgebound lanes.

And you shall stand upon the headlands high,
And taste the seawinds blowing wide and free,
And know the vastness of the spreading sky,
And feel your soul float out in ecstasy.

There in the secret land upgarnered wait
The golden moments of the vanished years,
Whose brief possession woke your heart too late,
And melted in the misty rain of tears.

Elisabeth M. Wood.

The Interesting Case of Eusebius Bunn.

EVEN unto this day philosophers are disagreed as to the moment of efflorescence of the soul in the human infant. Some have contended for the concurrence of spiritual conception with the physical union of the pronuclei; others have embarked upon metaphysical arguments unsuitable for discussion in so serious a work as this; others again find a sleepy haven from the vehement waters of tumultuous thought in gentle religious thesis. Where Pastor and Professor walk with indifferent security, it behoves the errant Penman to voyage warily indeed; wherefore the writer urges this opinion with tremulous diffidence, that the soul is resident in the body and is receptive to some impressions, at any rate during the hours of birth: for a momentous maternal impression alone could, I feel, explain the extraordinary characteristics which dominated the behaviour of the subject of this monograph during his existence, a behaviour which declared itself previous even to his birth. It may be argued, of course—but I must bequeath the solution and just arrangement of such problematical elements to my reader, and confine myself to the straight narration of the facts.

Jotham Bunn resided at Belle Vue, George Dubb's Street, Bircham. His domestic establishment was of the kind indicated by the name of his house; his social position is admirably expounded by the cognomen of the street; and Bircham is a small manufacturing town on the borders of the Black Country. In view of these facts it need hardly be added that he was married, that his wife was faithful to him, and that they kept a maid who had one night out per week and alternate Sundays. Mrs. Bunn had been married to Jotham for three years when the undesired happened, and it may be that the earliest revolt of his mother against the intrusion of our hero gave him his curious trend, for Mrs. Bunn, albeit extremely interested—as befitted a tenant of Belle Vue—in the maternity experiments of her neighbours, was equally averse to anything so troublesome in her own person—or, shall I say, on her own account.

Jotham, although agreeing with her in their privacy, was really overjoyed in secret, and important in public. At the Annual Meeting of the Friendly Society of which he was secretary, it is verifiable that he informed no less than 21 of the 56 delegates of the approaching extension of his family circle—if two and a maid can be regarded as constituting a circle. It will, therefore, be understood that Jotham waited anxiously for the fearful-happy day of the nativity.

But his desire for the accomplishment of this eternal miracle was trifling compared with that of his spouse, who was perpetually informing *her* friends of her detestation of her position and of her desire to "get shut" of the increasing incubus. With his mother's wish the unborn Eusebius seemed to be in entire accord, and he came to the light of a damp day of English summer with no great adversity, and some weeks earlier than the most hopeful mother could have expected.

This untimely birth was symptomatic of the nature of the child. Throughout his sojourn in life he kept to the rule of cutting himself adrift from his environment and its affairs. Of course the first example of his mania for self-sequestration was not realised as such. Many of his own and his parents' pristine acquaintances maintain, indeed, to this day that it was purely accidental. The writer hopes, however, to show that this was in fact the first phenomenon of his penchant.

The truth of this contention will be quite apparent to the unbiassed reader when I offer a brief summary of his biography. It was not in the earlier years of his extraordinary career that intimacy burgeoned between the writer and Eusebius Bunn—an intimacy so fraught with delight and interest to one of us, at any rate. This regrettable occurrence was explicable for two reasons: one, the most important, doubtless, was that I was his junior by eight years, and was therefore unborn; the other was that our parents were unacquainted. Regretfully I must chronicle the deplorable fact that we did not meet until I entered the Grammar School where he was a pupil. The earlier facts of the case I give therefore with reserve, but I must assure the reader that so far as possible I have verified them by careful juxtaposition of the several accounts, which certainly tally admirably.

In his first year the infant Bunn gave continual evidence of unusual psychological phenomena. From the first he appears to have expressed a vehement antipathy to his father. Now Jotham Bunn was by no means an ugly man; in fact, I have every reason to believe that at this time he was not even plain. Yet the child disapproved of his father from the first, and that in spite of the latter's really insistent endeavour to interest the child by wagging his fingers (which were pleasantly plump) or cracking his thumb joints (a talent for which he displayed considerable aptitude) or winking his kindly blue eye (or eyes). Eusebius remained unmoved, and his father, who felt that he could not face the pity of his friends should they know the story, took to deceiving them, and thereby began a fall from grace which might have led to the complete moral obscuration of Bunn Senior. His next antipathy was, it appears, his mother. This first showed itself in a welcoming of the "Other

Mother " Baby Feeder, in place of that estimable lady. The breach gradually widened, until he appeared to detest her even more than he did his father. For this again there seemed no reason save in the mental constitution of the boy himself. Mrs. Bunn was a worthy woman of quiet manner and generous disposition and proportions. She could coo quite pleasantly, and seemed in every way fitted for the up-bringing of a normal infant. I have every reason to believe that she loved the child as long as she was able, and she certainly did her duty for a number of years after that. I might add that she bore seven infants after Eusebius, and that all of them are living, and living respectably and well. No, the cause of dissatisfaction was certainly not to seek in Violet Bunn—unless perhaps as has been suggested. It is worthy of mention here, that the neglect which he extended to his mother caused her to turn her attention to her husband, thus saving him from the disastrous effects of the moral lapse to which we have referred. Gradually the child's dislike for people became general. Until his fourth year he knew very few, but he objected to all. Nurse-maids came and went; visitors told each other (and others) of his bad behaviour or of his mother's ineptitude, according to the degree of their amity towards Violet Bunn. His baby sister he treated with indifference, his father with repugnance. About the age of three and a half he developed a temporary love for toys, but suddenly he gave them up with decision and finality. Then he was sent to school.

One might imagine that school would either have terminated or intensified his bent. It did neither. Although looked upon as a rather unemotional child, he appears to have escaped the notice of his school mistress. We gather that his bearing towards the children of both sexes, when he was thrust into their society by the ordinary course of events, was casual, that he shunned them uniformly, but he never seems to have quarrelled or fought, nor did the larger girls ever scratch him as far as can be ascertained.

Of his mental attributes at this time we know next to nothing. Schoolmistresses rarely know anything about the state of a pupil's mind, and this schoolmistress was not an exception. She has furnished me with many particulars which have no bearing on the subject, such as the number of Eusebius' fellow pupils, the names of the vicars and curates of the parish since 1861, a clay model of a bunch of grapes made by one Amanda Griggs, the head girl of the year before the advent of Eusebius, and two picture frames made of string wound over cardboard stars for one of which the juvenile Bunn was responsible. We may suppose, however, that his work was neither good nor bad, for at the Grammar school which he entered at the age of eight he neither distinguished himself nor was entirely extinguished. During the eight and a half years of his

residence at this school he never gained any academic or sporting kudos. He never had a friend nor a fight, was never thrashed nor made a prefect. The headmaster analysed him in his reports as "Intelligent but completely lacking in enthusiasm." That headmaster was a very wise man, and his wisdom wrote that remark. On my entrance into the school I fagged for Bunn; and his treatment of his subordinate installed him as my beau-ideal. Some senior boys treated their fags very badly and overworked them; others were extremely kind, but worked them none the less. Bunn, however, was always courteous, but gave me no tasks beyond those of school routine. He seemed to want to hear or see nothing of me, and this aloofness, coupled with the strangely solitary position he enjoyed, trebled the grand esteem I had for him. He was generous, too, after his own fashion. A bachelor uncle was supporting him and attending to his education, and he kept Eusebius well supplied with "tuck." This auxiliary diet did not interest the youth, however, and usually he would give it diffidently to anyone who happened to be near him; often the food was neglected and spoiled. Once or twice during our school acquaintance Eusebius seemed to break from his obsession, and for a few days or hours he would talk to me in a free-hearted way, but as soon as something turned our attention to himself, at the earliest moment of subjectivity, of half-introspection indeed, the curtain seemed to fall again.

At seventeen Eusebius entered his uncle's business. The merchant's office in Birmingham was run on the usual lines, and in six months the youth had learned all the fraudulent practice of middle-man commerce. At nineteen a successful coup won to him the immoderate respect of his uncle, which was only terminated by the sudden death of that esteemed gentleman some nine months later. This felicitous event threw Eusebius into more heavy responsibility, a position of which his temperament was calculated to enable him to take the utmost advantage. His flagrant individualism, his complete lack of morality, gave him a natural advantage over his competitors, hampered as they were by consideration for *apparent* decency. In a few years, and in spite of his youth, he was the most wealthy of the merchant ring of that midland metropolis.

His position was overturned by the very factor which had made for its upbuilding; for the enforced combination with other members of his order, from whom he had contrived in the years of insecurity to keep aloof, renewed the reticence which distinguished him. In fine, he retired at twenty-eight from all participation in affairs, and settled into a country house in a sparsely inhabited district of East Anglia. Here for a while our hero appears so far to

have fallen from his innate idealism as to have become inveigled into a sexual experiment. Welton Prior offered a meagre living only to its vicar, but to his wife its advantages were nil. The reverend gentleman found distractions in glass houses and bottles of the same transparent material, but the wife of the vicar had not a shoulder whereon to lay her head. To many women this is no cause of active misery, but with the vicar's lady 'twas very otherwise. As the vitreous distractions already alluded to became more pressing upon the reverend exchequer, the parsonage had to be offered to Bacchus on a quarterly tenancy, and on these terms Bunn engaged it, while the Reverend Mr. Dolphin, M.A., and his spouse became absorbed in the domesticity of a neighbouring farmer, until such time as the reverend resources should be re-established to the point of efficiency. The exodus of the reverend duo from the rectory was not absolute, for the vicar had stipulated that he should keep an eye on the greenhouses, and his lady determined to keep an eye on Eusebius until such time as a more humane rapprochement might be effected. Bunn's diffidence only enhanced Mrs. Dolphin's determination, and it ended by Eusebius accompanying her to Harwich, en route for a continental watering-place. (How our hero was brought to this point I am unable to surmise, versed, as I am, but ill in the methods of female persuasion. The slight information which my friend afforded me of this intercourse is my sole guide in the narration of this portion of his career, the lady being inaccessible for reasons which will soon be apparent).

Arrived at their hotel in the evening, the lady gave, I gather, many signs of tender and solicitous affection which naturally enough constrained our hero to the point of exasperation. He retired to his room in a state of extreme perturbation, which the lady seems to have misunderstood. There is little doubt that this misconception of his motive on the lady's part caused the hiatus, for, instead of allowing him time to orientate himself with the conditions of mated existence by degrees, the tactless woman followed him upstairs and—undressed herself. Eusebius stood stunned and watched her. In spite of her kindly encouragement and her evident attraction to his person, his characteristic aloofness began to assert itself. She addressed him repeatedly in the process of dishabillement, but he answered only by chaotic mutterings. This she conceived was mere modesty, and so she switched out the light and groped her way across the room to where Eusebius was standing, doubtless trusting that the friendly darkness would free him from his hypersensitiveness and his evening clothes. For how long she sought him in this romantic wise who can say?—for Eusebius went out with the light, tiptoed downstairs, ran out of the hotel, and drove like a maniac homeward to Welton Prior.

Enquiring at the hotel of the head waiter and the porter's wife (the pristine chambermaid), I learn that the lady, after spending two days in a flamboyant flirtation with a major, left the hotel in the company of the "juvenile lead" of a theatrical troupe touring at that time in the district. Further enquiries have brought no news of the lady, and the reader must, therefore, resign himself to the loss of her version of the escapade.

I was the only visitor to the house during Eusebius' three years' tenure of the vicarage of Welton Prior, and I spent two week-ends with my friend. One of them was purely accidental, for I happened to run into him in the course of a walking tour in the neighbourhood. On the second occasion he invited me.

"Dear Winterbottom" (he wrote) :—

"I wish you to come down to pass a short period with me at my house. I have come to a decision, the fulfilment of which demands the assistance of a man of understanding, and I hope that you will grant me this.

"For a long time I have felt the necessity of curtailing my dependence upon society, and since the possession of chattels entrenches upon the freedom which is every man's due, I have determined to dispense with my goods. I find the simplest way is to turn over to you my whole fortune, giving you absolute power of attorney.

"Wire me when you will arrive."—Eusebius Bunn.

Arrived at Welton Prior, I essayed to turn Bunn from his idiosyncrasy, but he held proof against my reasoning. He told me that he had been harassed by his dependence upon humanity for so long that his mind was quite evenly and tenaciously resolved upon leaving the society of mankind and taking to the wandering existence of a tramp. During the few days that I spent with him, we were very much together, and I had ample opportunity of studying my friend. He was a fair, rather handsome man with a frank expression of countenance, which lost something of its pleasantness at close range on account of a strange deadness of the eyes. These eyes were the most extraordinary that I have ever observed; large and deeply blue, with a quality of almost summary decision in them, their vitality was obscured as though it were imprisoned in a cell of glass. I do not know whether I have made this clear to my reader, but I trust that I shall not be accused of hair-splitting finesse when I liken the eyes to those of a painting which had been laid in with inspired vigour by a master and then emasculated by an application of some unsuitable glaze at the hand of an incompetent amateur.

For the rest, Eusebius was clean-shaven, and dressed with a conventional excellence. His establishment, though simple, was

well maintained. One thing, which, looking backward, surprises me, was the sense of responsibility which he possessed. He always appears to have rendered to the Caesars of legal and moral convention their appointed dues. A possible explanation of this is that it saved him the social contact he detested. Culturally his unusual mental attitude asserted itself most forcibly, as would be expected. I do not think he had ever read a newspaper, and by this time, though for how long I cannot say, he had got rid of all books. From slight references I gather that he had read profoundly in sporadic bursts, chiefly metaphysics and evolutionary philosophy. To the world-sympathy of Shakespeare he professed an ultimate antipathy; cynics and satirists he regarded as too finite of perception to warrant serious consideration; and of one writer alone had he a favourable opinion—*Ibsen*. Like most Englishmen, he did not object to music as an accompaniment to meals or conversation, but unlike them he did not profess to be "passionately fond" of it. Moderately good taste was betokened in the choice of the few pictures he bought, but with the exception of a particularly brutal Hogarth they consisted entirely of landscapes, and these were noticeably devoid of figures. A fine sixteenth century Italian crucifix in his bedroom led to explanations, in the course of which my friend told me of a sincere contemplation of entry into one of the more rigid monastic orders, against which, however, he had decided on account of the disciplinary obligations.

Bunn, having turned over to me the management and the total emoluments of his estate, wandered forth without taking farewell, and for several months I heard nothing of him. About three months ago I received the following communication pencilled upon a damaged fly-leaf of a grocery catalogue:—

"Dear Winterbottom,

"I am taking the only course open to one who resents the infringement of society upon his entity. You will diagnose my wishes, and will, I feel sure, carry them out in view of my coming inability."—Eusebius Bunn.

Immediately upon receipt of this note, I hastened to the barn from which it was addressed. The attentions to which my friend had objected with such idealistic fortitude in life had followed him posthumously, for a small boy had found him hanging and reported the discovery to the police, whom I found in possession of the corpse. I had, perforce, to give evidence of identification at the inquest, and I assisted at the simplest of pauper funerals, which I am sure would have gratified my friend.

The coroner, who wore a black bow tie and signet ring, and appeared to suffer from some harassing asthmatic disorder, remarked on the fact that the deceased had a knife in his right hand, and that

the neck-tie (produced in court), with which this delicate operation had been performed, bore traces of having been partly sawn through. This was taken as evidence of the deceased's endeavour to cut himself down whilst in the throes of partial strangulation. In consonance with his implied advice, the verdict with which these twelve simple country tradesmen signalised their incomprehension of the monumental spiritual conquest of this great individual, was "Suicide during temporary insanity." To the discerning observer, my own theory will, I venture to suggest, be the more credible, for I conceive my dear friend, torn by the anguish of physical dissolution, resenting and resisting (vainly, alas!) the fact of his dependence upon that yard of spotted foulard neckwear.

H. R. Barbor.

A Mme. L.

Femme pianiste, tu m'écrases.

Les bras,

Les cheveux de nuit—et qui pendent,

Et les doigts experts—mèches de fouet . . .

Aussi tu joues Rebikoff, " Les Démons s'amuseant."

Toi, d'une sorcellerie impudente et inattendue,

Tu les évoques, ces démons, ils s'inclinent, ils tournent, ils dansent,

En effet les démons s'amuseant . . .

De moi.

H. R. Barbor.

The Circus.

The other day a circus came to the town :

Vivid with gilt and crimson the caravans fared the sunlit morning
streets.

All the urchins, released at mid-day, hastened to the field where the
great white tent rose.

I too went ; saw swart men drive pegs and trot horses.

At dusk I leaned on a stile, smoking,

Listening to the ceaseless stir of many beasts in the shuttered
cages ;

Watching the crowd serry at the scintillant, flare-lit portal.

Enviously I recall Freddie belabouring Joey, foot and fist,

I recall them, allies in insult, garrulously reviling the superb fellow
with the be-gemmed shirt-front and the sinuous whip ;

I sigh for Mlle. Penelope upon " the unique white Andalusian
mare "

Then, because my mistress is an Intellectual Woman, I took her to
see " Hindle Wakes ! "

H. R. Barbor.

Dawn.

My friends are gone,
One to bed, another to a woman,
The third—to death?

I sit by the table,
Before me stripp'd dishes,
Before me the broken viands and the bottles

In the street grows the tumult of the day,
The lumber and clatter of carts, the hail of mechanics.
To-morrow is to-day.

From my balcony high o'er the street
I watch the somnolent town
Turn, yawn and awake :
Then go back
Into the room,
Into the wine-tainted air
And the dull, weary reek of tobacco
And the memory of my good friends
Three ?

H. R. Barbor.

The City of the Beautiful.

FROM his window, close under the eaves, Denis gazed sadly over the darkling moorland. His visions were melting away like mist; his enchanted City was woven of fantasy, and intangible as fairy moonbeams.

A purple haze softened the distant hills, and a fresh breeze redolent of autumn woods caressed his pale cheek with a lover's tenderness. Then, from the house, rose faintly the sound of laughter, the clatter of jugs and glasses; the dying shadows of his dream faded like timid wraiths, leaving him once more conscious that he was but clay.

He imagined them all, those stolid countrymen below, drinking his father's ale; their dull, flushed faces and ponderous speeches. They were sorry for him, he reflected; how obvious were their clumsy attempts to conceal their tolerant pity—mingled with the distrust of the unusual that is common to their kind! His smile faded, and a momentary bitterness arose against the silent hostility of that stagnant village. Not a soul with sympathy and understanding; everything seemed moribund.

His moods of bitterness were usually only transitory; for habitual suffering had dispelled the illusions of the sensuous world, gradually revealing the reality of the spiritual. Life had been, for him, continual disillusionment—but with each ideal lost, his conviction that ultimate happiness lay within had gained. And when Love, the most poignant, and yet most glorious illusion of all, had seared his soul, he was strengthened rather than weakened; for he was freed from the bondage of the one remaining ideal to which he had been clinging so blindly.

So slowly had he learned to regard the earth as the shadow rather than the substance, and all his former desires underwent a mystic transmutation, finding fulfilment in the boundless realms of imagination. Adolescence, with its final disillusionment, had added a passionate reality to his dreams

Always a visionary, from early childhood the spell of unknown lands, regions of unearthly beauty, had coloured life with strange ecstasies; now all his aspirations flowed into the weaving of a mystic city, where all earthly joys were immortalized. Glowing through the mist of his dreams like a rosy flame and floating before him, mirage-like, in his waking hours, the vision haunted him with increasing intimacy. Until recently it had existed for him as a picture of intense beauty, an infinite source of delight; content to remain a worshipper, he had desired nothing more than the tranquil

joy of contemplation. But imperceptibly a change was coming over him, for his whilom hatred of his surroundings was returning, and his moods of bitterness became more and more frequent. Strange, evasive longings would surge up within him—above all, the maddening desire to attain the City of his fancy, to realise his dreams in the very flesh.

Lately he had had the most amazing visions. The City had appeared to him more vividly than ever before. Scenes would flash before him as clear-cut as jewels: impressions of domes and towers glittering like gold and ivory at the foot of wooded hills, with a sea of deep indigo sparkling beyond; dazzling markets with gay awnings spread over gleaming fruits; and a great white Temple, shining like jasper. And constantly he had seen a solitary figure, waiting in the dusk at the edge of darkling woods; a maiden of enchanting beauty, lissom limbed, and with lustrous, blue-black hair. She seemed to be the living symbol of all the wild beauty and mystery of the City as she waited there eternally, a passionate longing in her dark, wistful eyes At those moments his heart would swell with an awful sadness, and his desire to attain the City would sweep over him with maddening intensity.

But there were moods when he seemed to awake, amazed; surely he had allowed himself to be conquered by his dreams, and was cherishing a wild and blasphemous longing for the unattainable. In such moods his bitterness would appear to him as a morbid stain—a rank growth poisoning his whole being. Then a grey shadow would darken the City ominously, and there would rise before him a dread vision of blackened ruins weltering in desolation beneath a sullen, glowing sky.

Such a mood came over him now, as he stood musing at the window. It had grown dark and cold, and a thin drizzle was falling. From below came the sound of singing; the sonorous bass notes beat out into the night with a dull monotony. He slammed the window down and lit his lamp.

From a haze of visions remote and evanescent as the vapour of stars slowly crystallized the colonnades and cool portico of the great white Temple, shining like jasper. A chant of wild sweetness arose like incense from within; as in a dream he gazed at the bowed forms of the worshippers Then, with a thrill, he recognised the maiden for whom his soul ever yearned; her eyes were lit with a joyous fervour as she sang the responses, and he saw every feature of her pure face more intimately than ever before. Dimly he heard the priest chanting at the altar as he watched her, sick with the pain of her tender beauty Suddenly, clear and sonorous, came the dire prophecy of destruction; his Loved one paled white

as the columns beside her, and a vague fear crossed his heart like a shadow And again the mighty praises thundered forth, and odorous clouds from the great thuribles swept over the throng.

II.

Twilight was falling when he started for the moors. All his latent resentment had leapt up into a flaming rage, kindled by his father's withering epithets ; a red mist swam before him as he rushed from the hateful house into the hushed evening.

Dim vapours, heavy with the decaying odours of autumn, exhaled from the moist earth. The lanes were carpeted with russet leaves ; a flush of palest rose still lingered in the opalescent sky. Gradually the wistful melancholy of late October stole over him.

As the dusk deepened he passed ghost-like lovers, silent and motionless in the tenebrous gloom. Soon he left the lanes behind. There was no moon, but the stars shone clear in the deep violet sky ; in the pale light the rolling moorland looked softened and strangely remote. Faintly came the sound of a village clock chiming, and the peaceful lowing of cattle ; then silence, solemn and inviolable.

He stopped, exhausted, and flung himself on the soft turf. All his bitterness had evaporated, but there was a dull ache round his heart ; he thought of the vision of the Temple, and the face he had seen, and the memory was like a stab of pain. His desire smouldered insatiably

" Oh, God," he breathed, " Oh, God "

He groped about, stunned by the blackness that surrounded him ; but as he felt the intense warmth beating down on his head and arms, he realised that he had been dazed by the sun's glare. Cautiously opening his eyes, he looked around ; then an utter amazement and awe came over him, for the dim, starlit moorland had gone, and he was lying, loosely clad, on a mossy bank on the border of towering woods. Before him stretched away verdurous hills and dales into a distant haze ; radiant, sun-kissed flowers breathed strange perfumes into the hot air, and a murmuring breeze wafted their fragrance to his nostrils.

Bewildered, he turned and gazed below . . . And then his blood leapt through his veins with a wild exultation, for through the tears of joy that filmed his eyes he saw, glittering and magnificent, the domes and towers of his Dream City—unveiled and attainable at last. In the open spaces fountains played, palms rustled ; crowds clad in garments of dazzling hues thronged the markets. Beyond, a great sea heaved, its wave-tips sparkling like crystal under a sky of sapphire, and breaking into fairy foam on silver sands.

He sat, dazed and motionless, idly watching a distant figure approaching along the white road rising to the wood.

Then his temples thudded strangely, and a queer choking arose in his throat, for he knew every movement of that slender form, every feature of her pale face, fair as a moon flower; she was coming to him—his dream-maiden, incarnate, in all her loveliness

Mute with unutterable joy, they gazed into each other's eyes, reading the fulfilment of all their wistful longings; and then, enfolded in his arms, she buried her dear head on his breast and wept quietly, while a wondrous peace descended on them like a blessing. Her trembling body, her pure loveliness, thrilled him with an ecstasy of adoration. With quivering lips he kissed her hair; she raised her mouth, lovelier than the most fragrant rose, and all the anguish and longing of an eternity were melted away in the utter sweetness of that rapt kiss.

Lying on the mossy bank as in a dream, he heard her speak; and her voice was the music of the stars But at the name she uttered something seemed to flame up within him—for she had called him by his Eternal name, and to that mystic word he responded with all the love of his soul.

All their past longings and fears were shared as they lay dreaming beneath the towering woods; in the sanctity of their love they unfolded all their soul's secrets to each other.

And as the hush of evening stole over the sea they walked down the road of strange perfumes to the City, whose buildings were now transmuted to a red gold by the sinking sun.

In the tranquil days that followed he slowly realised the underlying secret of that enchanted realm. A radiant spirit of eternal beauty shone through everything; every movement seemed endowed with a mystic grace, every act one of perfect harmony. Infinite love and purity dwelt there; pain and evil were but remote and mythical qualities of another life.

And greatest and most beautiful of all was the dear love of his own Maid; and her beauty, both of body and soul, grew daily with her love.

Then came a day when they went gladly to the Temple to join in the sacrifice to the Omnipotent. But as they entered the portico a shadow darkened his soul. He looked down at his Loved one, and read a strange fear in her eyes; and they were silent, looking away from each other.

The sacrifice passed like a dream; the sonorous incantation of the priest, the aromatic smoke from the thuribles, seemed a phase of another life as he tortured himself with his anguished questionings.

Then the priest chanted the prophecy of destruction—of the day when evil would enter the City. He glanced at his Maid, and she was palely weeping. Again the thundering praises filled the Temple But she was still weeping, and her tears filled him with a poignant sadness. For they were not the tears of joy that she had shed when they met beneath the woods ; each crystal tear was a drop of bitterness in the cup of happiness that had been so pure.

And on that day a chill foreboding troubled him. Everything grew dim and shadowy, invested with a strange unreality. The people who dwelt in the City seemed like beings of another world ; he thought, with a shudder, that it was like living among saints. The pure grace and innocence shining through their faces, their movements, gave him the impression of angels

The soft twilight draped the City in peaceful mystery ; from red gold the buildings had changed to a dim grey. The sea heaved gently, faintly luminous beneath the glimmering stars. A tremulous fluting rose from the quiet market-place, enhancing the tranquil silence of dusk ; the melody was one of plaintive sweetness, and a wistful pain throbbed through the hearts of the lovers as they walked up the road haunted with unknown scents towards the slumbering woods.

Silently they gazed down upon the grey City ; then she turned to him with a piteous despair in her eyes.

" Oh, what is this awful longing that consumes me ? " she said, pressing her bosom as though her heart would break. " I feel it here . . . I cannot understand. I longed for you before you came, but I was happy—now I feel an awful longing that I cannot explain. I think it is because I feel that you are going to leave me . . . "

Despite the hopeless anguish of his heart, his dull conviction of inevitable doom, he strove to reassure her.

" I feel that everything will end," she said, " for the warning of the fall of the City has always troubled me. They say that a stranger from unknown lands will bring evil to us : and to-day I thought that even you, my own dear lover, might be that stranger . . . But how can you bring anything strange to us ? It cannot be you . . . "

" Who is this stranger ? How will you know him ? " he asked, despairingly.

" There will be a sign . . . and then everything will change," and throwing herself into his arms, she burst into a wild fit of sobbing.

Tenderly he gathered her to his breast, soothing her ; but the despair he had felt in the Temple now swept over him a thousand-fold.

Then at length she ceased weeping and rested quietly in his arms.

The grey twilight had deepened into the purple-black of dusk as they walked down the scented road. The plaintive melody still rose from the deserted market, and wove a spell of wondrous sweetness around their hearts.

Never had the City appeared so radiant as on the following morn. The mellow sunshine quickly melted away their misgivings, and they walked down the cool groves lightly and joyously. Children played round the plashing fountains, and beneath the palms rested beautiful women, with babes at their breasts . . .

"We will go to the Springs," said his loved one. Through verdurous groves and alleys she led him, until they emerged into an open glade, where the glitter of water met his eyes. The spring flowed, clear and translucent, into a natural basin, surrounded by a profusion of palms. In the distance many were bathing in the crystal water ; near to where he stood with the Maid lay several dwellers from the City, dreaming in the hot sunshine.

"Come !" she said suddenly, "Let us bathe," and in a moment she had flung away her garment and leapt into the water, splashing happily. In the sun her skin flashed white and pure as ivory, and she stood waist high in the spring, the drops glistening like diamonds on her breasts. She looked at him standing on the bank and commenced to speak, perplexed.

Then she stopped, aghast. For as he wavered, still cloaked, a deep crimson flush suffused his face, slowly spreading down to his throat ; and ashamed and trembling, he turned away.

She uttered a cry of unutterable anguish, and those who were lying at the water's-edge sprang up, amazed. But when they saw him stealing away, the shameful Sign stamped on his countenance, a wild shout went up from every throat, for they knew then that they had been betrayed.

Shaking with fear, he fled down the grove ; but the outraged crowd pursued him relentlessly. Their formerly placid features were now contorted by a fearsome and murderous hate Panting, he ran across the market place ; the mob increased in numbers, and the dread warning, "The Stranger !" rose from all sides, quickly spreading through the City. Sick with fear and gasping for breath, he turned up the road of strange perfumes and hastened

towards the woods. He looked behind ; they were gaining on him, their eyes aglint with the lust of vengeance.

Faint with exhaustion, he sank down by the mossy bank where he had met his Beloved

As the frenzied throng approached him, a veil of darkness descended on the City ; and in the sky above spread a sullen glow, burning with an awful vengeance. Then utter blackness . . .

Denis lay, dazed and cold, on the dewy moorland. The stars were paling in the pearl-grey sky, and a mist had risen.

He turned wearily home.

P. Caton Baddeley.

The Factories.

A little faun sat wearily
Playing on a hollow reed,
By a river flowing drearily
Between a waste and sodden mead
And a row of grimy chimneys belching smoke.

His hair was dank and matted,
His fingers numb with cold,
Round his head were flowers, plaited
As they were ere Greece was old.
The passers-by who heard him, never turned;
But one or two,
Threw a penny to the urchin—
Never silver, never gold,
To reward the songs that stirred the Gods
In the days ere Greece was old.

C. Neville Brand.

Owing to the need for economy in the use of paper, the project of issuing "The Vine" as a periodical has been postponed for the duration of the War.



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